

CLAIMS:

What is claimed is::

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1. A method in a network data processing system for distributed computing, the method comprising:
accepting a task for distributed computing;
sending work units to a plurality of data processing systems on a network, wherein each data processing system within the plurality of data processing systems includes a software for accepting a work unit, processing the work unit to generate a result, and returning the result, wherein the software is monitored for compliance with an operation policy requiring a connection to the network and allocating a period of time for processing work units; and
receiving results from the plurality of data processing systems.

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2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
assigning each of the plurality of data processing systems to a different user.

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3. The method of claim 1, wherein each data processing system within the plurality of data processing systems is in a different location.

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4. A method in a data processing system for distributed computing, the method comprising:
executing a worker application for a selected period of time, wherein the worker application accepts a request

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and processes the request to form a result, and returns the result; and

monitoring the data processing system for compliance with a policy requiring execution of the worker

5 application for a selected period of time and a presence of a connection to a network.

5. The method of claim 4 further comprising:

10 preventing use of the data processing system if the policy is unmet.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the power supply to a processor in the data processing system is cut off to prevent use of the data processing system.

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7. A method in a data processing system for distributed computing, the method comprising the computer implemented steps of:

receiving a request for a computer from a user; and

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initiating shipping of the computer to the user, wherein the computer includes a software for accepting a work unit, processing the work unit to generate a result, and returning the result, wherein the software is monitored for compliance with an operation policy

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requiring a connection to the network and allocating a period of time for processing work units.

8. The method of claim 7 further comprising:

30 adding the user to a database, wherein the database identifies all users with computers containing the software.

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9. The method of claim 8 further comprising:
 - receiving a task;
 - assigning work units for the task to users in the database to form a set of assigned users;
- 5 sending the work units to the set of assigned users.
10. The method of claim 7 further comprising:
 - billing the user a reduced price for the computer.
- 10 11. The method of claim 7, wherein the initiating step includes sending an electronic message to a shipping company to deliver the computer to the user.
12. A data processing system comprising:
 - 15 a bus system;
 - a communications unit connected to the bus system;
 - a memory connected to the bus system, wherein the memory includes as set of instructions; and
 - a processing unit connected to the bus system,
- 20 wherein the processing unit executes the set of instructions to accept a task for distributed computing; send work units to a plurality of data processing systems on a network, wherein each data processing system within the plurality of data processing systems includes a
- 25 software for accepting a work unit, processing the work unit to generate a result, and returning the result, wherein the software is monitored for compliance with an operation policy requiring a connection to the network and allocating a period of time for processing work
- 30 units; and receive results from the plurality of data processing systems.

13. A data processing system comprising:
a bus system;
a communications unit connected to the bus system;
a memory connected to the bus system, wherein the
5 memory includes as set of instructions; and
a processing unit connected to the bus system,
wherein the processing unit executes the set of
instructions to execute a worker application for a
selected period of time, wherein the worker application
10 accepts a request and processes the request to form a
result, and returns the result; and monitor the data
processing system for compliance with a policy requiring
execution of the worker application for a selected period
of time and a presence of a connection to a network.
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14. A data processing system comprising:
a bus system;
a communications unit connected to the bus system;
a memory connected to the bus system, wherein the
20 memory includes as set of instructions; and
a processing unit connected to the bus system,
wherein the processing unit executes the set of
instructions to receive a request for a computer from a
user; and initiate shipping of the computer to the user,
25 wherein the computer includes a software for accepting a
work unit, processing the work unit to generate a result,
and returning the result, wherein the software is
monitored for compliance with an operation policy
requiring a connection to the network and allocating a
30 period of time for processing work units.

15. A data processing system for distributed computing, the data processing system comprising:

accepting means for accepting a task for distributed computing;

5 sending means for sending work units to a plurality of data processing systems on a network, wherein each data processing system within the plurality of data processing systems includes a software for accepting a work unit, processing the work unit to generate a result, 10 and returning the result, wherein the software is monitored for compliance with an operation policy requiring a connection to the network and allocating a period of time for processing work units; and 15 receiving means for receiving results from the plurality of data processing systems.

16. The data processing system of claim 15 further comprising:

20 assigning means for assigning each of the plurality of data processing systems to a different user.

17. The data processing system of claim 15, wherein each data processing system within the plurality of data processing systems is in a different location.

25 18. A data processing system for distributed computing, the data processing system comprising:

executing means for executing a worker application for a selected period of time, wherein the worker 30 application accepts a request and processes the request to form a result, and returns the result; and monitoring means for monitoring the data processing

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system for compliance with a policy requiring execution of the worker application for a selected period of time and a presence of a connection to a network.

- 5 19. The data processing system of claim 18 further comprising:

preventing means for preventing use of the data processing system if the policy is unmet.

- 10 20. The data processing system of claim 19, wherein the power supply to a processor in the data processing system is cut off to prevent use of the data processing system.

- 15 21. A data processing system for distributed computing, the data processing system comprising:

receiving means for receiving a request for a computer from a user; and

- 20 initiating means for initiating shipping of the computer to the user, wherein the computer includes a software for accepting a work unit, processing the work unit to generate a result, and returning the result, wherein the software is monitored for compliance with an operation policy requiring a connection to the network and allocating a period of time for processing work units.

- 25 22. The data processing system of claim 21 further comprising:

30 adding means for adding the user to a database, wherein the database identifies all users with computers containing the software.

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23. The data processing system of claim 22, wherein the receiving means is a first receiving means and further comprising:

second receiving means for receiving a task;

5 assigning means for assigning work units for the task to users in the database to form a set of assigned users;

sending means for sending the work units to the set of assigned users.

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24. The data processing system of claim 21 further comprising:

billing means for billing the user a reduced price for the computer.

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25. A computer program product in a computer readable medium for distributed computing, the computer program product comprising:

20 first instructions for accepting a task for distributed computing;

second instructions for sending work units to a plurality of data processing systems on a network, wherein each data processing system within the plurality of data processing systems includes a software for accepting a work unit, processing the work unit to generate a result, and returning the result, wherein the software is monitored for compliance with an operation policy requiring a connection to the network and allocating a period of time for processing work units;

30 and

third instructions for receiving results from the plurality of data processing systems.

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26. A computer program product in a computer readable medium for distributed computing, the computer program product comprising:

- 5 first instructions for executing a worker application for a selected period of time, wherein the worker application accepts a request and processes the request to form a result, and returns the result; and

10 second instructions for monitoring the data processing system for compliance with a policy requiring execution of the worker application for a selected period of time and a presence of a connection to a network.

15 27. A computer program product in a computer readable medium for distributed computing, the computer program product comprising:

20 first instructions for receiving a request for a computer from a user; and

25 second instructions for initiating shipping of the computer to the user, wherein the computer includes a software for accepting a work unit, processing the work unit to generate a result, and returning the result, wherein the software is monitored for compliance with an operation policy requiring a connection to the network and allocating a period of time for processing work units.

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